

CDS student wins gold at nationals

Berkley Brown is a wonderful example of a 12-year-old who dreams big. A Grade 7 student at The Country Day School, Berkley has been skiing since she was 3 and trains at Beaver Valley and Mount St. Louis with the Southern Ontario team nearly every weekend during the winter.

Last year, she finished 6th in the U15 freestyle moguls event at the Junior Nationals. This year she set her sights (and her jumps) even higher with hopes of making it to the Senior Nationals. Berkley is living proof that determination, grit and a whole lot of practice and perseverance can help land you where you want to be.

The first weekend in March, Berkley won gold in freestyle moguls at the Provincial Championships held at Calabogie Peaks north of Ottawa. Scoring for the freestyle mogul event is based 50% on how well you ski (style), 25% on time and 25% on tricks. Berkley was the only girl to do a front flip ? one of the hardest tricks.

She competed against three other girls in the 13 and under group, and 14 girls under 19 in all. Not only did Berkley win her age group, but she also received the highest score of all girls under 19. This impressive performance qualified her for the Canadian Junior National Championships at Apex Mountain Resort in Penticton, B.C. over the March break.

At Nationals Berkley exceeded her expectations placing first out of all 12 girls competing in the 13 and under category. She captured the gold medal in the freestyle mogul event by a full point and placed 9th overall out of 28 of the under 19 competitors. Berkley also placed second in duals (where you race against someone else on the course).

After a brief return following March break, Berkley was travelling once again, this time to the Senior Mogul National Championships in Val Saint-Côme, Quebec, where she competed against world champions on the same course as Alex Bilodeau and Mikael Kingsbury.

Here she amazed everyone by qualifying among the top 16 girls (she was 15th) eligible to take a second run. Her second run placed her in 14th among the top national skiers in Canada.

For the dual qualification run, Berkley was once again 15th and raced against 22-year-old Maxime Dufour-Lapointe from the National team. Berkley had a great run, but Maxime went on to win the gold for the women, and Alex Bilodeau won the gold for the men.

?It was amazing to ski with Alex, Mikael and the Dufour-Lapointe sisters from the National team,? Berkley said. ?Hearing my name announced among the top 16 qualifiers was unbelievable.?

Berkley will be in Quebec the end of June for water ramp training and is then off to Whistler B.C. for three or four weeks of freestyle mogul training before returning for water ramp training at the end of August. Her goal is to master her back flip by the end of the summer.